Notes on
UNIDENTIFIED FRESHWATER
"MONSTERS"
in North America.

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(NOTE: The general approaah to a piece on this subject would be couched in terms to the effect that we should not be so coy or retiring about this subject as we have a dozen old standbys to Europe's every one, and a thousand times as many witnesses to them as ever saw the Loch Ness Monsters.)

The recent release of a highly technical report by the Royal Air Force's aerial photo analysis department, of a film of one of the "monsters" in Loch Ness, Scotland, has proved beyond any further discussion or possibility of doubt that said object is a living creature, and can not be anything else. The filmed object stuck out of the water for five feet and showed about twelve feet of its length but water disturbance and other items showed that the whole of it must have been about ninety feet long.

The very existence of large as yet unidentified animals in this Scotch lake had been vigorously questioned and denied for nearly forty years, and every imaginable explanation for the objects seen in and photographed in it had been put forward. (Curiously, some other lochs in Scotland and Ireland, and in Sweden, around the presence of similar creatures has never been questioned, BY THE LOCALS.)

Now that it is definitely established that there are large unidentified animals -- and if there is one, there must be more, as animals must have parents and offspring -- in one lake, the possibility and even probability that there are more of the same or other kinds in other lakes is greatly enhanced. As a corollary, reports of such should, from now on, not be scoffed at out of hand but should be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated.

This is most notably so in the North American continent where there are literally dozens of lakes in which such creatures have allegedly been observed for a much longer time than in Europe, and by thousands of times more people. Not a year has passed since the turn of the century that such reports have not turned up and they are not by any means all from Canada. Americans have been, and perhaps understandably, over-modest and retiring about our indigenous UFMs because of straight ridicule and the universal belief that Loch Ness was a case of publicity or liquor, that all animals and especially large ones are already identified, and that it sort of "couldn't happen here".

In this continent, the whole business is a lot more complex than in Eurasia because we have two distinct groups of UFMs -- one centered around the Gulf and Florida and extending up the basin of the Mississippi ; the other spread right across the continent from western Alaska to eastern Canada, and depending into the United States as far south as southern Idaho in the west, and the Adironacks in the east. The two groups have almost nothing, if anything, in common, and the former group will not be discussed further here.

The most interesting angle to the distribution of the latter

is technical but readily understandable to anybody; moreover, almost all the creatures described from this northern belt are closely similar and of the type now called by those scientists who have investigated the matter seriously "Longnecks". The same type extends right around the top of the globe, from Alaska east to the Atlantic, and then from western Europe right across Eurasia to the Bering Straits, via Ireland, Scotland, Scandinavia, Finland, Russia, and Siberia. Furthermore, they are all in landlocked, deep, coldwater lakes mostly in mountainous areas and almost all in lakes gouged out by the glaciers of the last ice-age. But most important of all, they all occur in one climatic and vegetational belt -- that known as the northern Boreal Forest zone. This is the belt that is clothed in the great, endless, coniferous forests now called the Taiga. We have the second largest swathe of this forest belt in North America.

The stories, descriptions, and corollary facts reported about our indigenous "monsters" or UFMs are very significant and interesting. They are much more diverse than those emanating from Scotland. What is more, they are current and in some other respects more up-to-date. I have hundreds of individual 'sightings' on file but just to show the current status of this business, I herewith list some of the highlights of the period since WW.II. It will be noted in this list that we have several repeaters that I called above our own "Old Standbys". :-

1965 -- Lake Ferguson, Miss
Lake Sushwap, B.C.
(Lake Labyukr, Siberia)
(Lake Haiyr, Siberia)
1964 -- Duquoin, Illinois (river)
Flathead Lake, Montana
Peyette Lake, Idaho
1963 -- Flathead Lake, Montana
(Lake Vorota, Siberia)

1962 -- Flathead Lake, Montana
1961 -- Flathead Lake, Montana
1960 Flathead Lake, Montana
Hollow Block Lake, Indiana
1959 -- Lake Winnipegosis, Manitoba
New Richmond, Ohio
1958 -- Peyette Lake, Idaho
1957 -- Lake Cowichan, Washington
Lake Okanagan, B.C. --(seen almost every year since 1889)
Lake Pohenegamook, Quebec
(Lake Vorota, Siberia)
1956 -- Lake Waterton, Montana
1953 -- Peyette Lake, Idaho
1952 -- Black River, Adirondacks, N.Y. --(last of several years)
1951 -- Peyette Lake, Idaho
1950 Peyette Lake, Idaho
1949 -- Lake Okanagan, B.C.
Lake Sushwap, B.C.
1948 -- Sushwap Lake, B.C.
Lake of the Bays, Ontario -- (last of three years)
1944 -- Peyette Lake, Idaho.

1937 -- (Loch Ness Monster -- "babies")
1929 -- Lake of the Woods, Redwood, New York.
1904 -- Sushwap Lake, B.C.
(and so on, back).

It should be clearly understood that the above is only a sampling, since my files on 1959 backwards happen to be on their way back from Paris, France, where they have been on loan to Dr. Bernard Heuvelmans author of the definitive work on Saltwater Monsters. There are literally hundreds more individual sightings but they are repetitous. In these other files however are half a dozen other what we call "permanent localities" where there is a long tradition usually going back to Indian times.

I feel that it would be most fitting that we apprise the long-suffering American public of THE new situation and the removal of any necessity for this modesty and fear of ridicule. It is also time to inform them, straight, what the scientists have come to think just what <u>kind</u> of animals these may be, and why. Any such speculation previously could only be speculative ; now it can be 'educated'.